



Commonwealth of Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet

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Kentucky Department for Natural Resources, the Appalachian Regional Reforestation Initiative Join J.W. Resources for Arbor Day Celebration

Students plant tree seedlings on a surface coal mine to promote reforestation

FRANKFORT, Ky. (April 18, 2014) – J.W. Resources, a recipient of the prestigious 2012 Excellence in Reclamation Award, hosted the 2014 Appalachian Regional Reforestation Initiative (ARRI) Arbor Day event on one of its Straight Creek surface mining operations located in Bell County near the community of Stoney Fork.

J. W. Resources, the Kentucky Department for Natural Resources (DNR), the federal Office of Surface Mining (OSM), ARRI, the American Chestnut Foundation and the Kentucky Division of Forestry (KDF) co-sponsored the 2014 celebration to showcase partnerships that promote the planting of high-value hardwood trees on mined lands in Appalachia.

The groups jointly endorse the use of current day reforestation techniques that can properly restore reclaimed surface mines back to a beneficial multipurpose post mining land use.

“This event is a reflection of the company’s continuing commitment to environmental stewardship and a wonderful opportunity to encourage these students to protect and cherish Kentucky’s natural resources,” said DNR Commissioner Steve Hohmann.

The annual Arbor Day celebration provides an educational opportunity for future Kentuckians to appreciate the environmental benefits of forests throughout the Appalachians. A number of elementary students and teachers from Right Fork Elementary School participated in the tree planting activities.

Gov. Steve Beshear proclaimed “Arbor Day in Kentucky” on Friday, April 4. National Arbor Day is Friday, April 25.

Dr. Tammy “Bee Lady” Horn and Mr. Michael French of The American Chestnut Foundation provided the students with presentations on honey bees and the American Chestnut prior to the tree planting event.

The event took place on surface mined land that is being reforested according to guidelines promoted by the Department of Natural Resources through their “Kentucky Reforestation Initiative.”

Once established, these new forests are capable of providing wildlife habitat, improve water quality, sequester carbon and mature into a valuable resource. For the Arbor Day celebration, native seedlings including the American chestnut, elm and white pine were among the species planted.

The participation of the state agencies in this reforestation effort is part of Gov. Beshear’s efforts to improve the health of all Kentuckians. The Governor launched [kyhealthnow](#) last month as an aggressive and wide-ranging initiative to significantly reduce incidence and deaths from Kentucky’s dismal health rankings and habits. It builds on Kentucky’s successful implementation of health care reform and uses multiple strategies, like a well-balanced environment, over the next several years to improve the state’s collective health.

Beshear joined KDF recently to announce [Kentucky’s 20/20 Vision for Reforestation](#), an effort to plant 20 million seedlings produced by the division over the next 20 years.

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